



*Will*  
*He*  
*See?*

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# 1951 Annual Report

NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR  
THE PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS

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*What are his chances for good sight?* Here's a fellow who certainly looks as though he expects a great deal out of life. Consider for a moment how much his enjoyment of the years ahead will depend on healthy eyes. As he goes through school, later at his work, in his every activity . . . what a difference clear vision will make!

Just what are the chances for good sight for this baby . . . for the new baby in your family or your neighborhood?

His chances are better than ever before in history.

Some of the age-old causes of blindness have been eliminated; others have been sharply reduced.

The infant born today can expect twenty years more of life than could the baby born in 1900; he can reasonably expect those added years to be blessed with good vision — *provided*, full and complete use is made of the sight-saving knowledge we now have.

Here is the tragic fact: more than half of all blindness occurring today could be prevented by using the knowledge we now possess. And even more blindness could be prevented by gaining new knowledge through research.

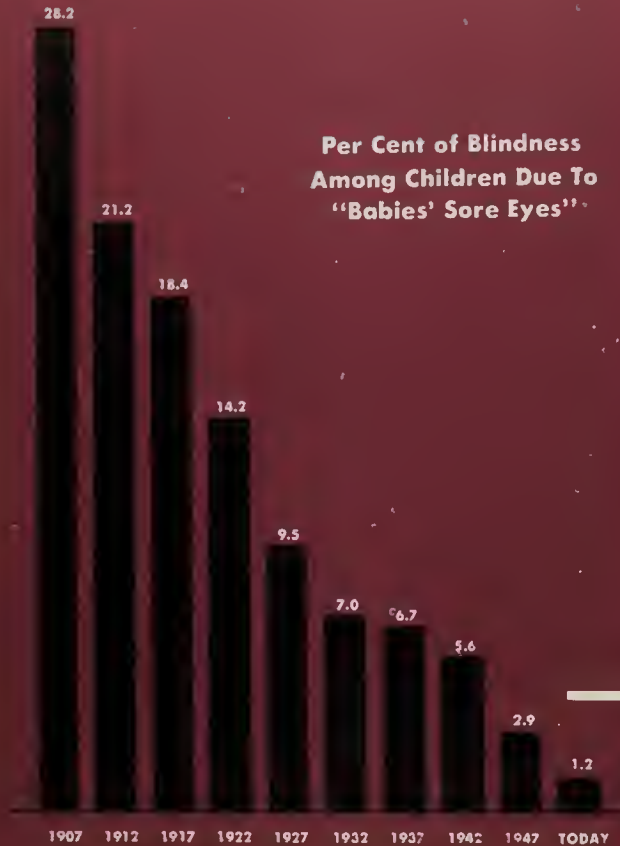
For more than forty years the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness has waged a continuous campaign to save sight. To the 48,000 individual members and contributors and to the many foundations who make this work possible — our profound thanks for their continued support.

In the following pages the Society reports on activities for the year 1951, and invites your attention to a number of urgent needs that must be met if we are to give the babies of tomorrow an even better chance for good sight.

*Mason H. Bigelow*  
President

## *Exit: One Cause of*

**Per Cent of Blindness  
Among Children Due To  
"Babies' Sore Eyes"**



In 1908 more than one-fourth of all blindness among American children was caused by a disease known as "babies' sore eyes"—yet twenty-five years earlier it had been found that by placing prophylactic drops in the eyes of newborn infants this type of blindness could be prevented. This knowledge was simply not being applied!

To bridge this gap was the first objective of the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness when it was founded in 1908. Since then, through constant education and legislation, blindness from this cause has been almost totally eliminated.

This chart tells the story of how one cause of blindness has been almost totally eradicated, thanks to the relentless campaign to apply the sight-saving knowledge obtained through research.

# Blindness

Other gains have been made as well. Loss of sight due to other infectious diseases has been reduced. Blinding eye accidents among children have been reduced 25 per cent in recent years—although there are still 85,000 eye mishaps among American school children each year, most of them preventable.

The job is still far from completed. The campaign to prevent blindness from diseases and from accidents must be continued. And there must be a greatly expanded program of medical research. For example: a baffling new eye disease called “retrolental fibroplasia,” unheard of ten years ago, is causing an increasing amount of blindness among premature babies. Research scientists are on the job, but as yet they have found neither the cause nor the cure.

**During 1951** the Research Committee of the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness made a number of special grants to hospitals and clinics. Here are some of the problems under study:

- What causes glaucoma?
- How do ACTH and cortisone combat eye inflammations?
- What causes retrolental fibroplasia among some premature infants? How can it be prevented?
- What is the relation between cataracts and diabetes?
- What is the best treatment for detached retina; for crossed eyes; for uveitis?
- Can plastic substitutes be used for live corneas in the transplant operation?

The National Society is waging a campaign to obtain greater funds for research. In this, the most health-conscious nation in the world, the amount invested annually in medical eye research is only a few hundred thousand dollars! Contrast this figure with the amount spent annually for eye cosmetics — \$5,000,000.

# One Out Of Four...



Photo by H. Armstrong Roberts

A recent survey reveals that an estimated 6,500,000 boys and girls in this country are in need of eye care—one out of four of our school children. If they are to have the care they need, teachers and parents must be on the alert for symptoms of eye trouble. Children themselves usually will not complain of poor sight because they do not know how clearly they ought to see.

To assist parents, educators, nurses and others to find

and help these children, the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness conducts eye health institutes, demonstrates methods of finding defective sight, and sponsors a continuing program of professional and public education. Thirty-two special institutes were held last year for professional workers in twelve different states.

Parents of an estimated 50,000 American school children have a special interest in sight conservation. These



are parents of children who have serious visual handicaps. For thirty-five years the National Society has led the movement to provide educational help for these children. Special facilities, such as books in large print and "bulletin" typewriters, for educating the partially seeing now exist for 8,000 children in 246 cities—but 42,000 other boys and girls need the same kind of help.

During 1951 work was continued on a study aimed at

improving eye health teaching and practices in teachers' colleges. A staff consultant spent an average of a week on each of forty campuses to obtain data on what the nation's future teachers are being taught on vision and eye health. The study is being sponsored by the National Society with the cooperation of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. The object: to insure tomorrow's teachers of better preparation for pro-

tecting the eye health of the children they will be teaching. Results of the survey will be published in 1952.

Special efforts are being made in a number of states to improve vision testing of children of preschool age. Sometimes eye defects must be treated before a child enters school if loss of vision is to be avoided.

**The consultation service** provided month in, month out by the National Society reaches the entire country. During 1951 staff members made a total of 168 field trips into 32 states. They worked with all groups concerned with saving sight: public health officers, medical groups, social workers, teachers, nurses, industrial safety engineers, and other community leaders.

During the year significant gains were made in strengthening the nationwide forces engaged in fighting blindness through the establishment of new statewide prevention committees in California, Colorado, Indiana, Michigan and Georgia. These committees are now developing programs to increase prevention of blindness services in their states.



## *A Wise Owl Always*

The man putting glasses on the owl is John D. White, an 18-year-old apprentice for the General Electric Company in Schenectady, New York. A few months ago while at work White had his safety glasses smashed by a flying piece of metal, but his eyes were unhurt. Thus he became one of the youngest members of the Wise Owl Club of America—an organization made up of workers who saved their sight by conscientiously wearing safety glasses.

The Wise Owl Club was launched three years ago as a safety incentive plan, and since then 2,471 men and women have qualified for membership—a gain of 65 per cent during 1951 alone. In addition to the saving of eyesight, this represents a saving to industry of \$9,285,000 in compensation costs alone.

One objective of the National Society's safety program is to reduce the number of eye accidents in industry which now total 300,000 annually. Some 90 per cent of these accidents are preventable. A complete eye program in



# Wears His Safety Glasses

industry includes eye tests, corrective glasses where needed, proper illumination, and fitting the skills of the worker to the visual requirements of the job. Spot check-ups show that by reducing eyestrain and fatigue production efficiency can be increased by as much as 25 per cent.

The Industrial Division of the National Society is now completing a special study of eye health and safety conditions in iron foundries. In all, 320 plants have been surveyed and the report will include specific recommendations to help reduce eye hazards in America's iron foundries.

At home and on the playground, as well as in the industrial plant, safety education is important. In a recent survey the National Society found that most eye accidents among children occur during unsupervised sports or play, and that the junior high school age is the most dangerous so far as eyes are concerned.

The Society's campaign to reduce blindness due to

accidents among children has three main points: *One*—Regulations on the use of fireworks and weapons such as air rifles, bows and arrows, slingshots. *Two*—Better supervision of play. *Three*—Training children to be safety-conscious.

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**Special Projects**—As a part of its consultation service to groups and to individuals, the National Society frequently participates in special projects in an advisory capacity. This year at the invitation of the Governor of Arkansas, the National Society cooperated with the American Foundation for the Blind in a survey of eye health facilities in that state. Similar studies were made on request for the New York City Health Department and the state of Oregon. In each case recommendations made by the National Society are now being utilized to extend preventive services.

## NEWS BRIEFS OF THE YEAR

- The Hon. Lewis W. Douglas, former ambassador to Great Britain, became Honorary President of the National Society.
- Official approval of the National Society's program was given by the House of Delegates of the American Medical Association.
- The Society's statistical division has made a study of the causes of visual impairment among partially seeing girls. A grant for this work was made by the New York Community Trust.
- Prevention of blindness workers from 24 states, Canada, and Brazil attended the annual conference held in New York City.
- The national Advertising Council gave approval this year to the educational campaign conducted during Sight-Saving Month (September).
- With the addition of another professional staff member, the National Society is increasing its efforts to find those who have serious eye disease and help them obtain early treatment.

## *For Good Sight—Regular*

If you are over forty, what are your chances for keeping good sight?

Your chances are excellent; better than ever before. It's true that the number of blind persons in the older age group is increasing at the rate of 4,800 a year. But for you personally this is not necessarily bad news. And here is why:

Glaucoma and cataract are the two major threats to the sight of older people. Glaucoma-blindness can be avoided in most cases by early detection and proper treatment. Sight lost due to cataracts can be restored by surgery in 90 per cent of the cases. So . . . remember to have that eye checkup at least every two years.

As a key part of its glaucoma education program the National Society this year produced a new film especially for general practitioners. These physicians are in a strategic position to help prevent blindness, by finding those

# Eye Checkups

with symptoms of early glaucoma and referring them to ophthalmologists for early care. The film was made on a grant provided by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation.

Another part of the glaucoma education program is with the general public. This year a new popular pamphlet on glaucoma was published; 900 radio stations carried spot announcements and special transcriptions warning of the danger of glaucoma; special newspaper columns and feature stories brought hundreds of requests from readers who wanted to know more about how to protect their sight from this insidious disease.

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In later years regular eye examinations are especially important to detect signs of disease that might cause loss of sight.



**From a State Health Commissioner:**

"May we express our appreciation for the help you gave with the institutes on eye health for children. Many who attended have commented on the practical help they received."

**From a teacher:**

"The ideas and materials you left with me will be used again and again in the future . . . the students were very much impressed and interested in your talk."

**From physicians — (on the new glaucoma film):**

"An excellent film . . . good for teaching."

"The film was highly complimented by the doctors."

"I am sure the showing of the film will accomplish much in the control of glaucoma."

The heart of the day-to-day preventive work of the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness is in the service rendered to both groups and individuals. Following are a few quotes from letters to indicate the value of this phase of the sight-saving effort:

**From a prevention of blindness worker:**

"The eye institute you conducted was the most profitable two weeks in my professional career. I wonder how I ever attempted to cover this field without having the special knowledge I gained from your institute."

**From a mother:**

"Thank you for your pamphlet on crossed eyes. I think your Society does noble work in prevention of blindness. I enclose \$1.00 to help. I wish it were 100 times that much."

## FORM OF BEQUEST

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I give and bequeath to the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness, Inc., a corporation created under the laws of the State of New York, the sum of \_\_\_\_\_ Dollars for its corporate purposes.

*Every week* in 420 American homes someone becomes needlessly blind. During the next ten years an estimated 220,000 Americans will lose their sight—*unless* the preventive campaign can be greatly expanded.

As we move forward may the rallying cry be: Let There Be Sight! . . . for the 6,500,000 American school children who have eye defects that need attention . . . for the 800,000 persons over forty who are losing sight from glaucoma and are not aware of it . . . for the 300,000 industrial workers who suffer eye injuries each year . . . for the 85,000 children involved in eye accidents each year . . . and for the countless thousands who suffer visual impairments that need not be . . . *Let There Be Sight!*

The need . . . is for an intensified program of education and preventive service to fight blindness among men, women and children. The need . . . is for vastly greater medical research to unravel the mystery of why some premature infants become blind . . . to find out what causes glaucoma and cataract . . . to find more effective treatment for uveitis, and how to prevent loss of sight from crossed eyes . . .

Can we conquer blindness? The answer depends on you. The sight-saving campaign of the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness is supported entirely by voluntary gifts and bequests.



## SUMMARY OF FINANCES

The following statement is based on the report of Peat, Marwick, Mitchell and Company, by whom the accounts of the Society were audited.

The work of the Society — research, education, and preventive services covering all phases of sight conservation — is carried on by a professional staff qualified to deal with the many technical facts and procedures involved.

Members of the board of directors and members of the various special committees who act as consultants on technical and scientific matters serve entirely without remuneration.

### *Income during 1951 — Operating Account*

Donations—New	\$ 32,004.33	
Renewal	140,723.16	
Memberships—New	10,197.55	
Renewal	<u>34,599.04</u>	\$217,524.08
Publications, Sight-Saving Review Subscriptions, Wise Owl Club Memberships, Vision Testing Charts, Films, Posters, Honoraria and Royalties	21,825.98	
For Special Projects	24,800.00	
Income, Endowment and Reserve Funds	25,124.26	
Income from Trust Funds (not administered by the Society)	<u>11,450.73</u>	
Total Income		\$300,725.05

### *Expense during 1951*

Professional Education	\$ 65,725.18	
Public Education and Program Support	145,691.97	
Program Development and Consultation Service	42,713.13	
Research—General	28,101.07	
Special Projects	6,118.20	
Industrial Program	28,194.25	
Glaucoma Program—General	6,416.43	
Special Projects	14,538.88	
Cooperation with Other National Agencies	1,549.00	
International Cooperation and Activities	250.00	
Administration	18,545.83	
Pensions	<u>7,638.32</u>	
Total Expense		\$365,482.26
Excess of Expense—Operating Account		<u>\$ 64,757.21</u>

### *Total resources at December 31, 1950* ..... \$659,419.68

Legacies received in 1951 and placed in Reserve Funds	\$ 34,913.21	
Net Increase due to Sale of Securities	<u>924.57</u>	
		35,837.78
		\$695,257.46
Excess of Expense—Operating Account		<u>64,757.21</u>

### *Total resources at December 31, 1951* ..... \*\$630,500.25

\*This includes mortgages and securities at book value. It does not include Trust Funds not administered by the Society and the Society's share in estates in the course of administration.

# NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS, INC.

1790 BROADWAY, NEW YORK 19, N. Y.

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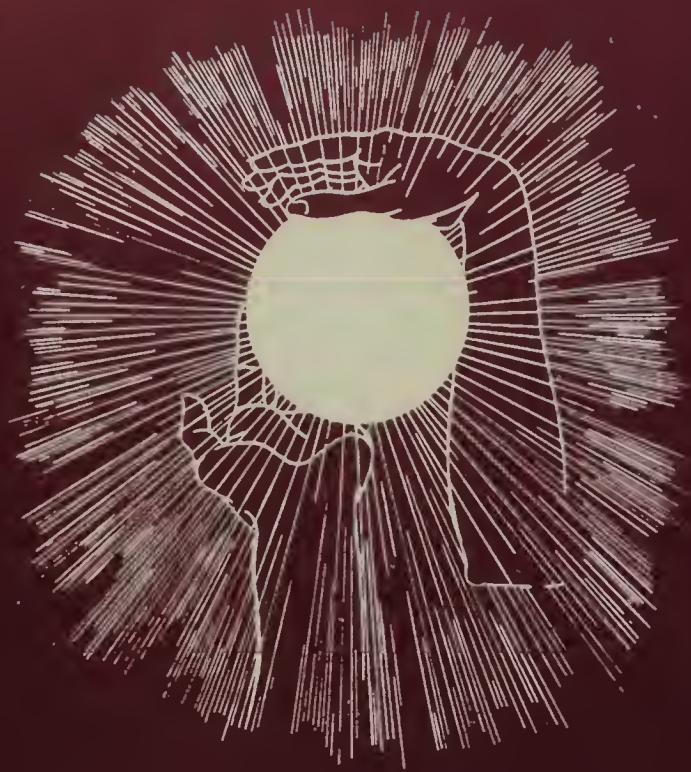
STATISTICS OF THE BLIND  
RALPH G. HURLIN, Ph.D., *Chairman*

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*Let there be light: and there was light.  
And God saw the light, that it was good.*